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Van Woerkom introduces legislation encouraging dentists to participate with Medicaid

LANSING—State Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Norton Shores) introduced a bill last week encouraging dentists to participate with Medicaid or volunteer their services to Medicaid eligible patients.

Senate Bill 791 would allow qualified dentists to receive a tax credit in an amount equal to the total amount of payments made in a tax year to repay their student loans or \$5,000, whichever is less.

To qualify, licensed dentists must be state residents and have their primary dental practice in Michigan. Dentists must also provide dental services to Medicaid recipients for reimbursement to qualify or provide dental services on a voluntary basis to Medicaid patients for at least 12 hours each month during the tax year they claim the credit.

“This piece of legislation is designed to encourage dentists to participate with Medicaid,” Van Woerkom said. “With the recent cuts in Medicaid funding hopefully this bill will make dental care more available to patients in need of care and help reduce dental health problems.

“And since October is National Dental Hygiene Month, we couldn’t think of a better time to introduce this legislation than right now,” Van Woerkom continued.

If the legislation is approved by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, dentists could claim the tax credit for a maximum of four years.

The legislation has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.